

STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES OF  
Tuesday, November 10, 2009

Ms. Gibson-Quigley called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:30 PM. On a roll call made by Ms. Morrison, the following members were present:

**Present:** Russell Chamberland  
Penny Dumas  
Francesco Froio  
James Cunniff  
Jennifer Morrison  
Sandra Gibson-Quigley, Chair

**Also Present:** Jean Bubon, Town Planner

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** Made by Ms. Dumas to accept the amended minutes of October 20, 2009.  
**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Mr. Cunniff  
**Discussion:** None  
**Vote:** 5-0-1, Mr. Chamberland abstained

**SANR – FREEMAN & REARDON**

Mr. Reardon spoke on behalf of the application. He stated that he is constructing a new home at 287 Cedar Street and the foundation was poured 8” too close to the property line. He was able to enter into an agreement with his neighbor at 285 Cedar Street to purchase 22 square feet of land. The frontage is not affected by this plan.

Ms. Bubon stated that she recommends that the Board approve the plan since it does not affect the frontage and both lots meet the requirements.

**Motion:** Made by Ms. Morrison to endorse the ANR submitted.  
**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Francesco Froio  
**Discussion:** None  
**Vote:** 6 – 0

Ms. Morrison, the Clerk, signed the plan.

## **THE HIGHLANDS LOT RELEASE**

Mr. Moss was present to represent the development. Ms. Bubon explained that the request is to release Lot 17 and to hold Lot 23 as Surety for completion of the development. She stated that the Board would recall endorsing an ANR that combined Lots 16 & 17 and this release must occur to allow the transfer of that new larger parcel for construction of a home. The work remaining after paving will be approximately \$20,000 and the assessed value of Lot 23 is \$94,000. Mr. Morse has also signed off on this request.

Mr. Moss also updated the Board on construction progress at the Highlands and the Sanctuary. The Highlands is being prepared for final paving and should be paved the week of the 16<sup>th</sup>. Light bases will also be installed within the Sanctuary and Highlands during this time. The Sanctuary will then be complete including as-builts. The Highlands will need bounds to be set and as-builts to be completed.

- Motion:** Made by Russell Chamberland to release Lot 17 and encumber Lot 23 as requested.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Ms. Dumas
- Discussion:** Ms. Dumas reminded the Board that an article for acceptance would have to be submitted for consideration by January 15<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Bubon will schedule this item on the December agenda for consideration.
- Vote:** 6 – 0

## **MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE VACANCY**

Ms. Gibson-Quigley advised the Board that unfortunately a member had to resign from the Master Plan Steering Committee and there was a vacancy that must be filled. She indicated that Ms. Bubon had contacted the 6 applicants not initially selected to see if they still had an interest in serving. The following applicants indicated that they still had an interest in serving:

- Thomas Creamer
- Carol Goodwin
- Arnold Wilson

Ms. Gibson-Quigley called for nominations.

- Motion:** Made by Ms. Dumas to nominate Carol Goodwin. Ms. Dumas stated that she wanted to nominate Ms. Goodwin because she thought there was strong representation of business groups on the committee now and thought that this nomination would provide balance and lead to healthy discussion since Ms. Goodwin had a lot of experience with Residential, Open Space and Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources.

2<sup>nd</sup>: Ms. Gibson-Quigley

**Motion:** Made by Mr. Cunniff to nominate Arnold Wilson due to his extensive experience on the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen.

2<sup>nd</sup>: Mr. Chamberland

**Motion:** Made by Mr. Froio to nominate Thomas Creamer due to his extensive experience on the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen and other community involvement.

2<sup>nd</sup>: Ms. Morrison

**Discussion:** Ms. Morrison stated that it was too bad that we had an opening and that the potential candidates were all the same faces that are on many committees. Ms. Dumas stated that she was on the Committee and was one of the old faces, but she believed that there were a lot of new faces on the Committee too. She thought that either Carol or Arnold would provide a nice balance on the Committee. She stated that Tom had a lot of experience too but that he was already involved in many things. Mr. Chamberland stated that he had attended the last Steering Committee Meeting and would agree that there are many new faces and he thought that Arnold could bring experience to the table. Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated that there were a number of people from Merchants of Sturbridge (MOS) and the Economic Development Committee on the Steering Committee now and those were groups Mr. Creamer is involved with.

**Vote Carol Goodwin:** 2 – 4 (Chamberland, Cunniff, Froio, Morrison Opposed)

**Vote Arnold Wilson:** 5-1 (Froio Opposed) A letter will be sent to Mr. Racicot asking that Mr. Wilson be appointed to the Committee. The other two applicants will be sent letters thanking them for their continued interest.

**Tom Creamer** Vote not taken, since Mr. Wilson received the majority of the Boards' vote.

### **ROSEMARY SCRIVENS – UPDATE COMMERCIAL TOURIST DISTRICT (CT) PLAN**

Ms. Scrivens updated the Board on the progress she had made on this project since the last meeting. She provided the Board with an updated timeline, draft analysis and draft review of existing planning documents and relevant studies for its review. She indicated that she needed to add information from the Open Space Plan and Walkable Community Day into her analysis.

Ms. Scrivens convened a Focus Group in early October and they will be meeting again in December. The Focus Group will be asked to review the documents that she provided to

the Board prior to that time as well as any information she gathers at the Public Forum on November 21<sup>st</sup>. She will then conduct a SWOT analysis with that group. Ms. Gibson-Quigley asked for an explanation of that term so that those unfamiliar with it would understand. Ms. Scrivens stated that is a Visioning Term that stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Ms. Scrivens stated that parking and transportation issues seem to be a central issue for this District. The residential survey that she conducted indicated that the residents in the District found traffic issues to be their greatest concern. She stated that a lack of pedestrian friendliness needs to be addressed.

Ms. Scrivens has been in contact with Phaldie Taliep from Cubellis and will be having a conference call with him and Jon Henson since she wants to work in concert with other consultants when there is project overlap.

Ms. Gibson Quigley said that a big issue is how the Board deals with shared parking when all the parking is privately owned. Ms. Scrivens stated that a lot of it has to deal with building a collaborative effort among the land owners. All agreed that parking is an issue and that municipal parking is needed. Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated that she noticed some things in the report that could be easily remedied such as cleaning sidewalks and trimming ivy. She stated that there is a real dilemma at play with the District since slowing down traffic creates more congestion and it is a through route, but at the same time you want to slow the traffic down for the businesses located in the District.

Ms. Dumas stated that perhaps it would be slower but it would be a nicer area in the end. Ms. Scrivens that since this is a state numbered roadway she needs to speak to Mass Highway about traffic calming and what may be permitted. She has also been advised that if sidewalks and other improvements are added, then drainage needs to be considered. Before she goes too far with this she wants to speak with them to find out what is the likelihood that some of these improvements may be approved.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated that she thought the idea of opening up the river was a good one too. Ms. Scrivens stated that it is beautiful and she does understand that the vegetation provides protection for the river, but visibility would be a big asset. Ms. Gibson-Quigley agreed stating that it would be nice if you could see the river from some of the restaurants.

Ms. Scrivens stated that another area that really needs to be looked at is signage. She stated that in many cases it is difficult to see what any given shop or storefront is because the signage is small and cannot be internally illuminated. She understands the Temporary Sign bylaw was recently changed to allow signs to be erected more often. Ms. Dumas stated that bylaw process was contentious and she believes that more attractive signs could benefit the town more. Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated that a recommendation should be that the entire bylaw be reviewed, maybe by a Consultant rather than in-house.

Ms. Gibson Quigley stated that another area the Board would like input on is how to deal with the industrial properties in the middle of the District. Ms. Dumas stated the industrial property at the end of the District on Holland Road should be considered as well. Ms. Scrivens stated that she will look into those areas.

The Board thanked Ms. Scrivens for all the hard work she has been doing on this project.

## **TOWN PLANNER UPDATE**

### **Clean Energy Choice Grant Application**

Ms. Bubon stated that she has prepared a Clean Energy Choice Grant Application that requests the use of funds for the installation of an 840 Watt Grid-Tied Solar Electric System that would be installed at the DPW Building. This site was discussed with Mr. Morse and he is in support of this project. The Town of Sturbridge has the ability to access the entire account balance of the Clean Energy Choice Funds of \$9,446.11 for this project. The estimate she received is for \$10,000.00 for this project and therefore would need some additional funding. She is sending the application to the Board of Selectmen for signature and is hoping the Town will have some available funds to make up the difference. She stated that the reason she chose this project was because the company she received the quote from indicated that we could place photos and an electricity generation meter onto our website. The meter would show how much electricity was being generated on any given day and this could be an interesting way to promote alternative energy and to educate the public on how much energy can be created. She was hopeful that this request will be supported so that we can submit by the deadline of November 30, 2009.

The Planning Board agreed that it did support this application. Ms. Bubon will forward this to the Board of Selectmen for signature.

### **420 Main Street**

Ms. Bubon advised the Board that a new restaurant will be locating in Perennials old location and is to be called 420 Main – they will serve a variety of entrees at the restaurant. Owners are Kim & Mike Cantwell and two partners. Opening Scheduled for March 15<sup>th</sup>

### **Handout on Freeport Vision 2010**

Ms. Bubon provided a handout on Freeport Vision 2010 and explained a bit about that planning process to the Board. She stated that in this instance the business owners with support of the community actually funded the study and then the town worked with the merchants to implement the plan. She thought it served as a good example of a public private partnership.

## **NEXT MEETING DATES**

- Saturday, November 21, 2009 – Master Plan –Public Forum 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM
- December 1, 2009 – Planning Board
- December 15, 2009 – Steering Committee

- December 16, 2009 – Reserved Date for Planning Board if Needed

### **OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Dumas advised the Board that she had looked into whether Community Preservation Funds could be used towards a project such as that proposed by the Green Center Assisted Living. She stated that the Community Preservation Coalition had passed along a great deal of information on the issue and it seemed to depend upon the situation and a main factor seemed to be that the homeowner or tenant must be low income individuals to qualify. She had provided the information to the Housing Partnership for further review and research.

On a motion made by Ms. Morrison and seconded by Mr. Cunniff the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:30 PM.